

Message Text

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10

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

OMB-01 RSR-01 /079 W

----- 128258

R 221620 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3328

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 3304

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS IN BG

SUBJECT: REPORTED STORY ON US MINES IN CHITTAGONG HARBOR

REF: (A) CALCUTTA 488; (B) DAO MESSAGE 20 MARCH; (C) STATE 51678

SUMMARY: WE HAVE SWEPT THE MINES FROM CHITTAGONG HARBOR.
CAN THE U. S. NAVY CLAIM AS MUCH? END SUMMARY.

1. I RAISED THE MATTER OF THE MINING OF CHITTAGONG HARBOR
WITH THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS IN THE COURSE OF MY
VISIT MARCH 20. I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF STATING THAT NOTHING
OF THE KIND HAD OCCURRED AND THAT I WAS PERSONALLY ASTOUNDED
THAT SO SERIOUS A CHARGE COULD BE MADE IN SO OFFHAND A
MANNER. I CITED THIS AS A CASE IN POINT AFTER THE MINISTER
HAD AGREED MOST EMPHATICALLY TO OUR SUGGESTION THAT
INDIA AND THE UNITED STATES OUGHT MUCH MORE TO CONSULT
ONE ANOTHER IN ADVANCE ABOUT REAL OR POSSIBLE DISAGREEMENTS.
THE MINISTER HAD WITH SOME FEELING AGREED, SAYING WE MUST
GET RID OF QTE IMAGINARY UNQTE DISAGREEMENTS. I
THEREUPON WEIGHED IN WITH THE CHITTAGONG HARBOR PRONOUNCEMENT.
I TRIED TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION, AND HOPE I SUCCEDED, THAT
IF THE PRIME MINISTER WISHED TO MAKE A FOOL OF HERSELF, IT
WAS HER BUSINESS, BUT EVEN SO IT WASN' T VERY GROWN UP. THE
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FOREIGN MINISTER SEEMED GENUINELY UNAWARE OF THE INTERVIEW. HE QUERIED THE JOINT SECRETARY PRESENT, WHO SEEMED EQUALLY UNAWARE. HE SAID TO ME HE WOULD LOOK INTO IT FORTHWITH. I MORE OR LESS ASKED HIM NOT TO BOTHER AS THE CHARGE WAS PATENTLY UNTRUE AND HE, I AND THE WHOLE WORLD KNEW IT. YESTERDAY, A PROMPT REPORT CAME FROM THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS TELLING US THAT THE ENTERPRISE TASK GROUP HAD NEVER BEEN CLOSER THAN 720 NAUTICAL MILES FROM CHITTAGONG HARBOR. WE TELEPHONED THIS INFORMATION TO THE MEA JOINT SECRETARY WHO HAD BEEN PRESENT, MOSTLY BY WAY OF ADDING TO THE ABSURDITY OF THE CHARGE.

2. TODAY, MRCH 22, THE JOINT SECRETARY CALLED IN THE DCM TO SAY THEY HAD CHECKED INTO THE STORY AND THEY QTE DID NOT THINK THE PRIME MINISTER HAD MADE THE STATEMENT. HER STATEMENT COULD BE INTERPRETED VARIOUS WAYS UNQTE. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT WE WOULD NOT MAKE MUCH OF THE STORY. HE KNOWS PERFECTLY WELL THAT SHE MADE THE STATEMENT, BUT HE HAS TO EARN HIS LIVING, TOO. I HAVE SENT BACK WORD THAT OF COURSE WE WOULD NOT MAKE ANYTHING OF THE STATEMENT, AND THAT I HAD SAID AS MUCH TO THE MINISTER. NITPICKERS THOUGH WE BE, THERE ARE SOME THINGS BENEATH OUR NOTICE.

3. IN BETWEEN THESE TWO NON- EVENTS, WE HAVE PICKED UP THE RUMOR THAT THE RUSSIANS, WHO ARE NOW SWEEPING CHITTAGONG HARBOR, MAY BE SPREADING THIS STORY AS AN EXCUSE FOR BECOMING A QUASI FIXTURE OF THE KARNAPHULI RIVER.

4. WOULD SOMEONE HAVE THE KINDNESS TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO THE NAVY FOR ITS PROMPT AND PRECISE REPLY TO MY INQUIRY ABOUT THE ENTERPRISE'S MOVEMENTS. I WAS SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT THE EMBASSY IN NEW DELHI HAD NOT UNTIL THIS VERY MOMENT, AND IN THESE CURIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES, BEEN GIVEN ANY DETAILS OF THE CRUISE OF THE ENTERPRISE. FOR ALL ANYONE HERE KNEW (THE EXCEPTION BEING GALEN STONE WHO MADE IT HIS BUSINESS TO FIND OUT WHILE ON CONSULTATIONS RECENTLY) OUR PICKET SHIPS WERE HALF- WAY UP THE BRAHWAPTRA BEFORE DECIDING THE HELL WITH IT.

5. THE RELEVANT PORTIONS OF THE INTERVIEW WILL BE SENT BY
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SEPARATE TELEGRAM. NOTE THAT THE INTERVIEW WAS GIVEN IN MID-

JANUARY, AND THAT THE INTERVIEWER IN HIS QUESTION STATED
THAT THE MINING HAD OCCURRED AND ONLY IN RESPONSE DID
THE PRIME MINISTER AGREE.
MOYNIHAN

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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